

EVIDENCE OF COLLABORATION REGARDING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND EXTENDED SERVICES

Supported Employment Services

The AZRSA collaborates with profit and not-for-profit Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) providers to ensure that the capacity to serve Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) clients who need supported employment services is available within the community. This collaboration includes assisting existing programs to be as integrated and productive as possible. The AZRSA has assisted in this effort, funding program development/expansion/improvement projects. Ongoing services continue to be sustained by service contracts.

Concern with continuity of services for clients has led the AZRSA to strongly encourage providers of supported employment services to also contract with agencies who are responsible for providing/paying for extended supported employment services. To the extent possible, the AZRSA works to create a seamless transition from VR-supported employment services to extended employment services paid by/through these other agencies. Title XIX waivers allow the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS)/Division of Behavioral Health Services (DBHS) and the DES Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) to pay for such services. This combination of funding has permitted a much greater number of joint clients to benefit from services.

Contracts with the major Independent Living Centers (ILC) have expanded the availability of "benefits planning" for all VR clients receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) benefits. This is important because AZRSA policies require counselors to refer clients receiving SSI and SSDI to the ILCs for this service - both when planning an Individualized Plan for Employment and when preparing for VR closure.

Extended Supported Employment Services

Collaboration exists between the AZRSA and the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS)/Division of Behavioral Health Services (DBHS), the DES Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), and the Councils of Government (COG) to make ongoing employment supports available to successfully-rehabilitated clients of the VR program who need them.

Collaboration with the ADHS/DBHS

The AZRSA has an ongoing intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with the ADHS/ DBHS to serve individuals with serious mental illnesses (SMI). This IGA contains joint vision and mission statements and sets overall policy for services to clients/members of both agencies. It emphasizes the relationship between mental health and work and the need for both agencies to integrate the concept of work into everything that is done for, and with, clients/members.

Major provisions include:

- The establishment of an advisory committee that is made up of providers, consumers, and VR and Regional Behavioral Health Authorities (RBHA) management. This advisory committee meets quarterly.
- The development of vocational plans between the AZRSA districts and the local RBHAs. These plans contain goals, standards, referral procedures, and joint training.

4.8(b)(4) Collaboration regarding SE and Extended services

- The IGA calls for extensive staff training and has developed a yearly training budget and calendar with the support of the AZRSA staff. Training is provided to serve the needs of all stakeholders in this agreement, the consumers, providers of service, clinicians, and VR staff by dedicated trainers funded under this IGA.
- The IGA calls for dedicated VR counselors who have been trained to work with individuals with serious mental illness (SMI).
- In addition, the IGA assigns the responsibility to provide extended support services to the RBHA in each area of the state. The current IGA strengthens the commitment of the ADHS/DBHS to fund extended support services following transition from VR services.

Collaboration with the DES Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)

Collaborative efforts have been ongoing for well over 20 years with the DDD to meet the employment needs of individuals with developmental disabilities. In 1993, the responsibility for all employment related programming to this population shifted to the AZRSA. Responsibility for ongoing employment support service needs of individuals with developmental disabilities was re-assigned back to the DDD. Employment related services are coordinated with the DDD under a joint agreement that describes mutual roles and responsibilities. Coordination of services is handled at the local VR counselor/DDD support coordinator level. Only time-limited VR supported employment services are the responsibility of AZRSA.

Collaboration within DES and with the Councils of Government (COG)

The AZRSA works within the Department of Economic Security (DES) and with the COGs in planning for the use of Social Security Block Grant (SSBG) (Title XX) resources. The AZRSA assists the DES and the COGs with planning how to best use their portions of the SSBG resources. AZRSA has managed such resources to pay for the extended employment support services needed by VR consumers with the most significant disabilities who are successfully rehabilitated in the VR program. AZRSA contracts these monies directly with private, non-profit community rehabilitation programs.